AKO & CAC FAQs

Last Updated: 05 MAY 2006
More Information: AKO CAC Resource Center
(https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/241504)

Background

Over the past few months, the DoD and the Army have released a series of warning orders, tasks, and initiatives that make security and Common Access Card (CAC) authentication a top priority. AKO has reviewed all pertinent requirements, and has determined that a phased approach will be the best way to increase CAC usage on the site in accordance with policy.

The following **questions and answers** tell you all about CAC and AKO. You will learn about the services that will be restricted to CAC users, when these restrictions will occur, and how to use your CAC to login to AKO so that you can continue to take advantage of these restricted services.   For easy navigation, this document is separated into sections:

- **Part I: Introduction to the CAC**

- **Part II: Software & Hardware CAC Requirements**

- **Part III: Using your CAC on AKO**

- **Part IV: AKO Services Restricted to CAC Users (New)**

- **Part V: CAC Troubleshooting**

- **Part VI: Policies, Working Groups, & More Information**

Part I: Introduction to the CAC

Q: What is a CAC?

A: CACs, or Common Access Cards, are electronic identity cards that store certificates to help ensure that individuals are who they say they are.

Q: What do I use a CAC for?

A: You can use your CAC to login to the NIPRNET (required by 30 JUN 2006 for all Army domains); send encrypted and digitally signed emails (through Outlook or another email client; currently unavailable for AKO webmail); login to AKO; and login to AKO single sign-on protected websites.

Part II: Software & Hardware CAC Requirements

Q: What software is required to use a CAC on my computer?

A: If you use a PC, you must have the appropriate software installed on your computer in order to allow your computer to interact with a CAC reader. The Army has two approved products, ActivCard Gold and Litronic Netsign, which are included on the Army Golden Master. Your DOIM is responsible for loading the appropriate version on your computer.

Please ensure that this software is already installed before registering your CAC with AKO. In order to have the CAC software installed onto your work computer you will need to contact your local System Administrator.

Additional information will be posted in the AKO CAC Resource Center, located at https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/241504.

Q: How do I obtain the CAC software for my workstation?

A: Please contact your local system administrator for more information on obtaining the CAC software for your PC.

Q: What hardware is required to use a CAC on my computer?

A: You must have a CAC reader in order to use a CAC on your computer. All Army personnel are eligible for a reader; your organization should issue you a CAC reader if one is not built into your workstation. Readers for home use can be purchased from the Army Small Computer Program at https://ascp.monmouth.army.mil/scp/index.jsp. Additional CAC readers for remote access (travel or home) may be supported by the government as long as the appropriate commander/director determines it is a necessary expenditure; please speak to your supervisor for more information.

Q: How do I buy a CAC reader to use at home or on the road?

A: Visit the Army Small Computer Program (https://ascp.monmouth.army.mil/scp/index.jsp) site.

Part III: Using your CAC on AKO

Q: How do I login to AKO with a CAC?

A: To login to AKO with a CAC, you must first register your CAC on your workstation, and then register your CAC with AKO. For step-by-step instructions and troubleshooting assistance, please review the AKO CAC FAQ and How To Guide (https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/5084202).

Q: What is the difference between AKO CAC Registration and AKO Account Verification?

A: AKO CAC Registration is how you let AKO know that you have your CAC and would like to use it to login to AKO. AKO Account Verification is a separate action in which you are confirming with AKO that you have an official DoD record. To access, click on "My Account" in the header of AKO, and look for the "Verify Account" and "CAC Registration" buttons.
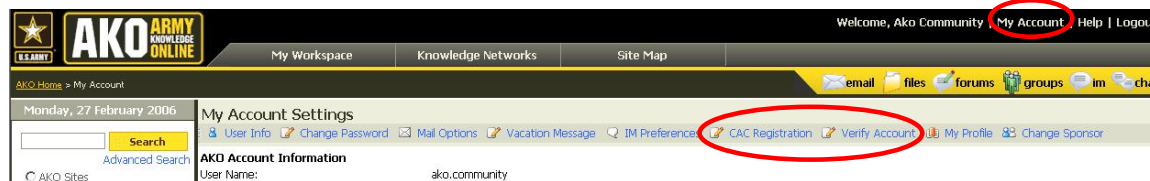
Q: Can I use my CAC to sign, encrypt, and read digitally signed email?

A: Yes! Review [user information](#) at the CAC/PKI website. For administrators setting up CAC to work with Outlook, review [System Admin information](#).

Q: I am an Army web administrator. How do I use AKO Single Sign-on services to CAC-enable my Army web application?

A: For more information, review the [AKO CAC Authentication 101 (https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/5075232)](https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/5075232) document.

Part IV: AKO Services Restricted to CAC Users (New)

Q: Will AKO force me to login with a CAC?

A: No. AKO will not force any users to login with a CAC. You will still be able to access the AKO portal and AKO webmail with a username and password.

However, certain users will be forced to login with a CAC to use specific AKO services. See the next Q&A for more.

Q: New Restriction - What AKO services will be restricted to a CAC session?

A: In the near future, AKO will require a CAC for **DA Civilians, Active Army, National Guard, and Army Reserves ONLY** to perform two specific actions - (1) changing your password and (2) sponsoring a guest account. This means that you will not be able to change your password or renew the accounts of any guests you sponsor unless you have logged into AKO with your CAC.

Q: What about retirees, family members, and other guests who do not have a CAC?

A: CAC restrictions only apply to Active Army, DA Civilians, National Guard, and Army Reserves. Retirees, family members, and other guests will not be required to use a CAC to change their passwords.

Q: When will password changes and account sponsorships be restricted to a CAC session?

A: Password changes and account sponsorship will be restricted gradually. Here is the timeline:

DA Civilians
- 25 March 2006: guest account renewal and sponsorships will be restricted to a CAC session
- 29 April 2006: password changes will be restricted to a CAC session

Active Army
- 27 May 2006: guest account renewal and sponsorships will be restricted to a CAC session
- 24 June 2006: password changes will be restricted to a CAC session

National Guard & Army Reserves

- 29 July 2006: guest account renewal and sponsorships will be restricted to a CAC session
- 26 August 2006: password changes will be restricted to a CAC session

Only the four account types mentioned above – DA Civilian, Active Army, National Guard, and Army Reserves – will need to use a CAC to change their passwords or sponsor accounts.

Q: Will Retirees still be able to sponsor accounts after these restrictions take affect?

A: It is likely that retirees will only be able to sponsor family members who can be verified in DEERS. Please stay tuned; the final policy will be available soon.

Q: What if I need to access AKO at a computer without a CAC reader and it prompts me to change my password?

A: If you are prompted to change your password when you do not have access to a CAC reader and your account type is DA Civilian, Active Army, National Guard, or Army Reserve, you will be able to change your password without your CAC, but your password will be set to expire in 3 days. You will have to reset your password using a CAC at the end of those three days and then the password will be reset to expire after 120 days.

Q: I am a content administrator on AKO. Will I be able to restrict my pages, files, etc. to only CAC Authenticated users?

A: Yes – in the near future, a "CAC authenticated" group will be created and made available to users to lock down their AKO content.

It will work like this: a user who logs in to AKO using a CAC will automatically be added to the "CAC authenticated" group. If you want to make sure that only users who have logged into AKO with a CAC can see your page, all you have to do is restrict your page to members of the "CAC authenticated' group.

Q: Will training be provided to show me how to restrict my information to CAC users?

A: Yes. AKO will post an announcement directing content owners to tutorials, which will be posted in the AKO CAC Resource Center (https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/241504) in the near future.

Part V: CAC Troubleshooting

Q: What do I do if I don't know the PIN that is associated with my CAC?

A: Do not call the AKO Help Desk; they cannot assist you. Instead, please contact your CAC issuing office or central processing/badge office to reset your PIN.

Q: What do I do if I am locked out?

A: If you do not know your CAC PIN or if you have locked out your CAC PIN (after three incorrect tries) you should contact your local help desk to determine the location of the nearest CAC PIN Reset (CPR) station. You should go to an ID Card Issuance Facility (your

central processing/badge office or Local Registration Authority) to have your PIN reset only if a CPR station is unavailable.

DO NOT CALL THE AKO HELP DESK. THE AKO HELP DESK CANNOT ASSIST YOU IF YOU HAVE LOCKED YOUR CAC.

Q: Is there a CAC Helpdesk?

A: Yes, the CAC helpdesk may be reached at iacacpki.helpdesk@us.army.mil

Part VI: Policies, Working Groups, & More Information

Q: Can I read the DoD directive that started this whole push towards CAC authentication?

A: Yes! Review the ALARACT (https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/5078284).

Q: Are there any points of contact for CAC training, implementation, and policies?

A: Yes! Review the CAC Cryptographic Logon (https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/237211) working group page for this information and much more.

Q: Where do I go to find the latest information on how AKO is integrating with CAC authentication?

A: AKO has created the AKO CAC Resource Center (https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/241504) in order to share frequently asked questions and answers, resources, and other information with the Army community. Check back frequently for the latest information.